

**A  
PROPOSAL  
FOR  
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
IN THE  
OAK BROOK CENTER AREA**

**Presented by  
Pace Suburban Bus Division  
In Association with the:  
Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS)  
DuPage County Planning Department  
Regional Transportation Authority**

**March, 1988**

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## OAK BROOK SERVICES PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

- The Oak Brook area is a major suburban activity center, with over 40,000 jobs generating over 100,000 daily trips in the area.
- The Oak Brook Shopping Center provides over 1.75 million square feet of retail shopping and has an annual volume of nearly \$500 million . Over 10 million automobile trips are made to visit the mall annually.
- The activity in the area has contributed to a significant traffic congestion problem and poor local mobility. The lack of existing transit service, combined with continued development, has created a shortage of service labor.
- Various transportation studies and the RTA-sponsored DuPage County Transportation Conference have identified the need for flexible and innovative transit service in the area.
- In response to these conditions, Pace is proposing the implementation of a circulator/distributor bus system in the area. The circulator service will utilize small sized upscale vehicles to provide comfortable and frequent trips between Oak Brook Center and nearby office developments. Five routes are proposed: Commerce Drive, Jorie Boulevard, Enterprise Drive, Windsor/Swift Drive and Oak Brook Terrace Tower.
- Expanded Metra Commuter Rail feeder service, subscription bus service and van pool services are also provided for in the proposal.
- The service is estimated to cost \$1.2 million annually and can be implemented in September, 1988, given a high degree of local support and cooperation.
- Funding for the service will be provided by the RTA, Pace, the riders and, hopefully, employers and business should the service provide a real economic benefit.



## INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

While Chicago and its adjacent suburbs are served by extensive commuter rail, rapid transit and fixed-route bus networks appropriate for the density and ridership generated in these areas, the outlying suburbs, where the bulk of the regional population and employment growth is occurring, have a limited amount of public transportation services. This comes as no surprise as suburban growth has been the dynamic result of easy access to automobiles and the massive construction of roads and highways. In many respects, mass transit cannot compete with the automobile in the suburban travel market. The suburban travel market with widely dispersed trip origins and destinations demands the timeliness, flexibility and convenience of automobile travel.

Transit's role in the outlying suburbs is therefore limited to some very selective but essential markets. Providing feeder services to the commuter rail system, local fixed-route services in the satellite cities (Aurora, Elgin, Joliet, and Waukegan), local Dial-A-Ride services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and reverse commute services from the city to the suburbs are the markets presently addressed (to varying degrees) by existing services.

No full scale efforts have been made to address the potential transit needs of emerging suburban employment and activity centers, two major centers being in the Oak Brook and Schaumburg (Woodfield) areas. While traffic congestion, a lack of local mobility and the unavailability of service labor are serious problems in these areas, they are also the types of problems that transit can help to address. In order to address these needs, transit services must be innovative, flexible, and specifically designed to meet the unique needs of the activity area. To that end, this proposal focuses on the Oak Brook area by providing services to address local mobility and service employment trips. By providing circulator services connecting over 60 buildings in the area with the Oak Brook Center, midday trips by area workers and residents for shopping, lunch, and other errands will be accommodated. Also, by maintaining these services or some portion of them in the AM and PM peak periods they can serve as a distribution system for existing fixed-route services. This will increase the labor market penetration of fixed-route service and enhance midday mobility for these employment trips. Employment in the Oak Brook area is estimated at 40,000 jobs. Present retail volume at Oak Brook Center is nearly \$500 million annually, the mall has 1.75 million square feet and generates over 10 million shopping trips annually. In recognition of the poor image transit has in upscale areas such as Oak Brook and the need for mobility on secondary streets, it is essential that the vehicles used for this project be smaller sized upgraded equipment such as the airport shuttle vehicles used by rental car agencies or something similar to Pace's new Champion paratransit vehicles. The Champions feature padded cloth upholstery, tinted glass and heavy duty air conditioning. These 15 passenger vehicles provide very comfortable and efficient short trips.

A second element of the proposal addresses the issue of traffic congestion and the work trip market by providing a specialized trip from transit dependent areas to employment areas. These "subscription services" have the potential to dramatically reduce traffic congestion in the Oak Brook area but will require a substantial amount of market research and a high degree of cooperation from employers and the communities involved.

Another mechanism which can be used to address work trips in the area is a subsidized van pool program. Currently, CATS (the Chicago Area Transportation Study) has a van pool





program concept which could be implemented in the project area. The van pool program relies on an owner/operator to make lease payments on a van, and collect payments from riders. CATS proposed a start-up subsidy which is phased out over a six-month period, giving the operator time to develop a constituency.

There is good potential for subscription and van pool services in the Oak Brook area, and workers brought in to the area by these services would represent a captive market for the midday distributor service enhancing its potential.

Before any services can be implemented, however, a comprehensive market research program must be conducted. We need to specifically identify employment volumes by sub area, research worker habits, and interview Oak Brook Center and Village Officials as well as area employers, all with the intent of determining if such services are desirable and if they will provide any real economic benefit to the area. This proposal will require a high degree of local support and cooperation in order to succeed. This support must be determined early in the planning process to avoid the misallocation of resources.

Only at the conclusion of the market research effort will it be possible to establish a highly specific service plan. It will also be necessary to clarify the goals and objectives for this program's performance.

In the interim, however, a draft service plan has been developed and is discussed in the following section along with a brief overview of existing services.



## Existing Services

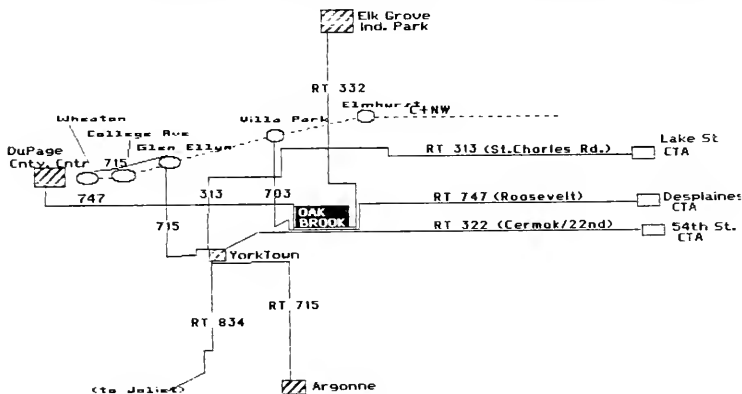
The Oak Brook Center is currently directly served by four Pace fixed routes. Route #322 operates all day between the Douglas CTA Rapid Transit Station and Yorktown shopping center via Cermak/22nd Street. This route is one of the heaviest used in the Pace system, carrying nearly 4,000 riders a day, approximately 875 of these trips terminate in the Oak Brook area. Route #332 operates all day between Elk Grove Village and Oak Brook Center via York Road and Cermak. This route carries over 300 riders on a daily basis. Route 703 provides service during rush hours between the Villa Park Metra station and the Oak Brook Center, it carries nearly 100 riders on a daily basis.

In addition to these routes, Pace recently implemented a new route - #747 - which provides all day service along Roosevelt Road from the DuPage County Center to Oak Brook shopping center. During rush hour, service extends to the CTA Des Plaines Rapid Transit Station via I-290. This new service is carrying 180 riders a day and growing.

In total, these services deliver approximately 1,000 people a day (2,000 trips/day) into the Oak Brook area. These existing services will provide the base upon which the local collector/distributor system will be built.

The following schematic represents these existing services in relation to the Oak Brook area.

**MAP 1**  
**EXISTING PACE FIXED-ROUTE SERVICES IN THE OAK BROOK AREA**





### Oak Brook Collector/Distributor System

In a recently released report prepared by CATS, the Oak Brook area is identified as a major suburban activity center. The report estimates there are over 40,000 jobs in the area creating nearly 64,000 daily work trips as well as 40,000 employee midday and business/visitor trips. Presently, transit is only providing about 2% of the 100,000 trips in the area.

The primary purpose of the circulator/distributor service is to make transit more accessible to a greater number of employers in the area, thereby increasing transit market penetration and share. In order for these circulator services to be considered successful in terms of financial performance and ridership productivity, it is estimated that the transit market share will need to increase to the 4-6% range or 4,000 to 6,000 daily trips. This has the potential of eliminating 2,000 to 3,000 autos from the area. It is worth noting that Oak Brook Center has parking capacity for 10,000 cars and the intersection of Cermak Road and Route 83 passes 145,000 cars in a one-day period. Given this, the circulator system, if successful, should have a significant beneficial effect on local traffic conditions.



The CATS report identifies 25 "sub areas" in the vicinity of the Oak Brook Center. The proposal presented here reaches 15 of them by using five focused routes that converge on Oak Brook Center. These services would operate both during rush hour and midday. However, in some instances, the level and time of service may vary to meet the particular needs of a given sub area; i.e., work start times, lunch hours, etc. The five proposed circulator routes are described as follows:

#### Commerce Drive

This routing would provide service to eleven buildings just east of the center. If access between Commerce Drive and Harger Drive were available, an additional four buildings would be reached. Employers along this route include AT&T, McDonalds, Eastern Airlines, and U. S. Can.

#### Jorie Boulevard/Kensington Road

This route would serve sixteen buildings immediately south of the center. Employers along this route include Continental Can, Chicago Bridge & Iron, Mutual Trust Insurance, Ace, GMAC, and Manville.

#### Enterprise Drive

This route would provide access to eighteen buildings to the east of Oak Brook Center.

#### Windsor/Swift Drive

This route would provide service to 22 buildings along Windsor, Bliss and Swift Drive. Both the Enterprise Drive and Swift Drive routes are east of the proposed transfer point with Pace line haul services at Oak Brook. Because of this, these routes may be more practical during the midday. However, Pace will examine the potential for a shuttle transfer point at the intersection of Windsor and 22nd Street. Employers along the route include Spiegel, Xerox, the Oak Brook Office Court, Portec, Lyons International, TRW, Swift Eckrich, Polaroid, and Evangelical Health Systems.

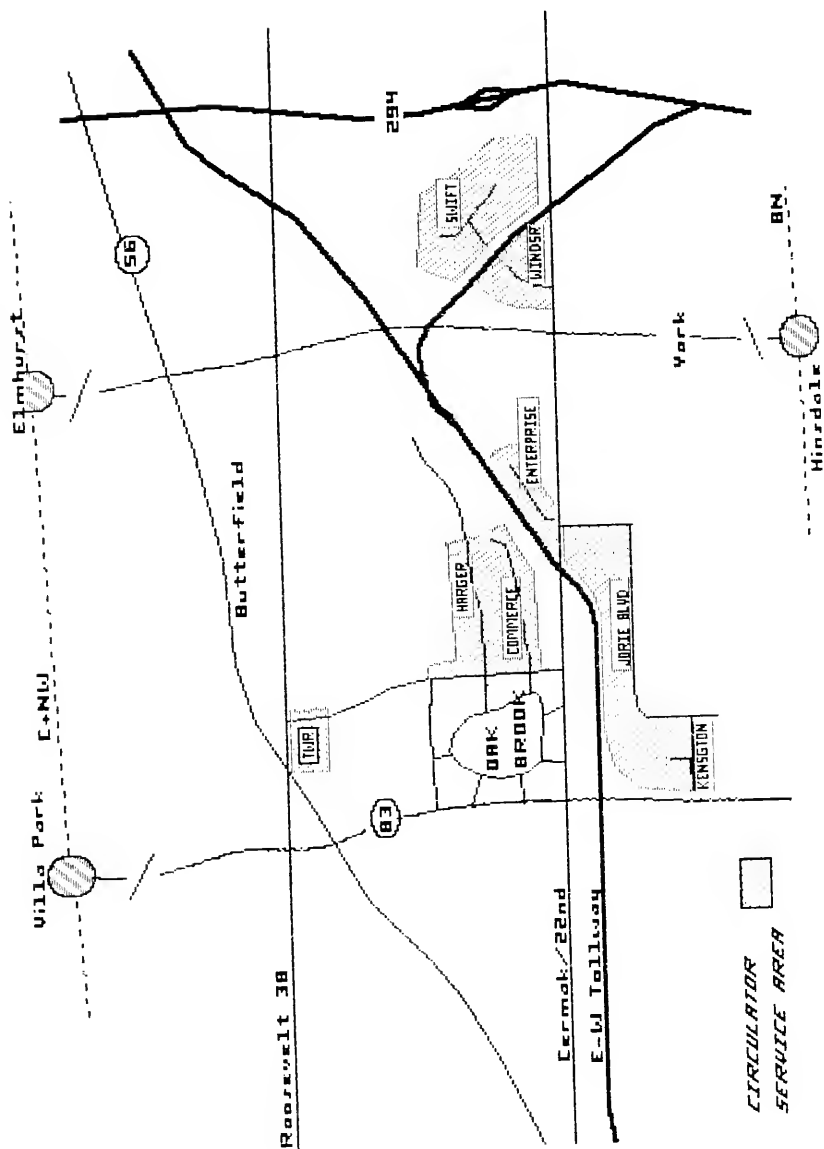
#### Oak Brook Terrace Tower

This route is designed to go directly to the Tower. Implementation would be based on occupancy of the office space. Service would operate all day. When fully occupied, the Tower will contain over 2,000 workers; nearly 5% of the area's work force.





**MAP 2  
PROPOSED CIRCULATOR SERVICE AREA**





In addition to these circulator routes, Pace will expand and improve commuter rail feeder service in the area. The service will operate between the Hinsdale station on the Burlington Northern, and Elmhurst and Villa Park on the Chicago and NorthWestern. The expanded rail service will also address expanded reverse commute service initiated by Metra.

#### Subscription Services/Van Pool

The DuPage County Planning Department has identified a number of areas in DuPage County that have a high transit potential for work trips. The proposal here is to provide work related trips directly between these areas and employment opportunities in the Oak Brook area. The communities of Franklin Park, Melrose Park, Maywood, Berwyn, Addison, Villa Park, and Westmont have been targeted for further analysis. If a sufficient number of workers in the Oak Brook area can be identified and are willing to participate in the service, it may be economically justified to operate a subscription bus or subsidized van to meet these workers needs. This potential for this service and its drawbacks are further discussed in draft report prepared jointly by CATS, MTA, and Pace.

#### Financing and Budget

The cost of the circulator/distributor service is estimated at approximately \$1.0 million annually. This estimate is based on the utilization of 14 vehicles for a total of 136 service hours per day. It is estimated that service will cost \$30 per hour though this may vary due to the equipment specified and contract length.

The subscription bus element is estimated to cost approximately \$100,000 annually. Some of these services have the potential to be consolidated into existing Pace service contracts generating some savings. The improved rail connections will cost approximately \$100,000 annually, reflecting the cost of new services for Elmhurst and Hinsdale.

Any van pool services provided will be initially funded through the RTA/CATS van pool program and not impact the project budget.



Beyond the operating cost estimates shown, there will be additional costs for research and marketing and promotion. It is estimated that at least 10% of the service budget or \$120,000 should be dedicated to marketing efforts. In addition, the following table summarizes the proposed expense budget.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ANNUAL AMOUNTS (000S)</u>
Circulator/Distributor Service	\$1,000
Subscription Services	100
Rail Service Improvements	100
Marketing	<u>120</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,320</b>

In the future, there may be a need for permanent capital investment in passenger facilities; however, as this is a demonstration project, no major capital investment is recommended at this time.

Financing for this project will be provided by the RTA and Pace. In response to Pace's proposed new initiative for the Oak Brook circulator and the result of the RTA sponsored DuPage County Transportation Conference, the RTA's 1988 budget establishes a \$5.0 million dollar fund to address high priority transportation projects and studies. The Oak Brook circulator is included in this program of projects.

In addition to fare box revenues, employer and private sector support may be required in order to make the service financially productive beyond the demonstration period. These mechanisms have yet to be determined and will be based in large part on what is learned via the market research analysis process.

#### Other Considerations

- As this project represents the first major effort to address the suburban activity center market and the needs and potential are largely unknown, it is mandatory that this project receive demonstration status from the RTA, thereby exempting its performance from the regional recovery rate calculation for Pace and the region. The project will require an exemption for a period of approximately 18 months in order to reach full potential.
- Initial high level contacts will need to be established with the Oak Brook Center and the Village. It is essential to have the support of the mall in order for the circulator project to proceed. Further analysis and development of this proposal will be held up, pending these discussions.



## Implementation

Presently, the goal is to get service started by September, 1988. This will require that service plans based on market research be finalized by the end of May so that they can be put out for bid. It is anticipated that the RTA will approve a funding grant and establish demonstration guidelines in early May. During the months of March and April, meetings with Oak Brook Center, the Chamber of Commerce, Village Officials, County Officials, and employers will be held to further develop the proposals. Market analysis and research will also be conducted at this time which will guide service design.







